

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain and reinforce all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest (albeit minimally since 1996) by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

As a radio broadcast professional for over twenty years, I am disgusted by the state our media map has degenerated to since the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This abomination has shaved away most of what diversity there had been on the airwaves by allowing a very few corporate behemoths to swallow up most of the available airspace, thereby preventing any point of view, whether political, civic or cultural except their own. The Commission was quite correct in its foresight in placing the original ownership regulations there in the first place, and the contrast between the two situations is blatantly obvious. Big Brother is transmitting, and the current proposal would make a bad situation even worse.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of this nation. Our forefathers believed democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media to be swallowed up by ever-bigger greedmongers whose sole interest is in what profits it can make off the people's backs, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be even further compromised. It certainly won't take place on the airwaves.

The public interest will best be served by STRONGER, not weaker media ownership rules in question in this proceeding. Too much damage has already been done.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those few who stand to profit in this issue, but also those many with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is imperative that the Commission review these issues more thoroughly and more carefully, and allow the American people (who, after all, OWN their airwaves) to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Roger Tirrill
New Orleans, LA